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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

# INFORMATION REPORT

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## Soviet Army Defection in Germany

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The majority cannot be reached. One has to consider two major psychological blocks against defection in the mind of the Soviet soldier. The first one is the reluctance of any honorable man to place his family at home in danger. Family bonds are very close in the Soviet Union. It is part of the State Code that relatives must pay for crimes of treason by a Soviet soldier. The second major barrier to desertion is Soviet legalism. Individuals have a great regard for law. Each man has taken the military oath, pledging himself to serve the state and defend it with his life. In the Lenin Room of each unit, this oath is framed on the wall. With it is displayed a framed set of abstracts of the State Code, proclaiming treason the most heinous of crimes, to be expiated by extreme penalties. After each defection, orders are read out to the troops at the Commander's Hour after breakfast stating the circumstances and announcing that the individual was caught by the Soviets, or recognized as an undesirable by the Western Powers and handed back. It is further announced that the man has been shot. A variation on this theme occurred when two men addressed my unit. One was a master sergeant and one a sergeant first-class. They claimed to have deserted to the West, become disillusioned, and given themselves up. Aware of the enormity of their offense, they stated, they were entirely willing to accept the heavy punishment which was their due. They might have been staging this confession as an act, but it made a big impression on the troops. Besides these two major obstacles to defection, there are lesser reasons. Soviet soldiers do not know what life is like in the West. They do not know how they would be treated. The cumulative effect of Hate America and other political indoctrination is to make the soldier suspicious and wary. Also, security measures against defection are intensive and the prestige of the security police is strong.

By the use of radio to the officers. To the soldiers, leaflets and newspapers distributed by the German population and persuasion by woman agents are the best means. At the present time most Soviet defection is brought about through German women who obtain civilian clothing for defectors and make arrangements for travel, shelter and food.

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Themes should be developed to reach the growing number of Soviet men who were taken from their parents at an early age and grew up without family ties in an orphanage. While this element is materialistic to the point of criminality and would be of dubious value to the West, it does not have the same ties to the Soviet Union as an average cross-section of the Army.

those who have had good standing in their units, and have reached the west, should write leaflets in the form of letters addressed to their comrades by name. These letters should tell of conditions and treatment. They should make such direct comparisons as "The Sunday of a Soldier: USA and USSR" pointing out why the Soviet soldier is under such tight controls.

Means of transmitting printed matter to the soldier include the following: (1) maneuver areas, in which Germans are used as caretakers, laborers, etc; (2) barracks, where latrines are some distance away, and are available to some Germans; leaflets could be spindled as toilet paper; (3) open training areas could be sown, sparsely, with leaflets weighted down with sticks and stones, or stuck on twigs in wooded areas; (4) laundry, coal, firewood, and food brought in from German civilian sources could contain propaganda.

Newspapers exactly resembling specific Soviet Army unit and Army newspapers in appearance, and delivered to the appropriate units could carry effective messages and stories.

The lowest echelon with a press is a Division. Regiments use posters, wall newspapers and typewritten materials. Army paper was the Stalin Guard, a daily; 1 paper was Za Rodinu which appeared twice a week. I believe that operated on press equipment locally procured. Soviet Army headquarters do not have mimeograph or hectograph machines. In the Spring of 1951 an order appeared forbidding the carrying or mailing of Army and Division newspapers out of the post. Such material, together with all personal correspondence must be kept out of sight in barracks or quarters. When left unattended, it must be locked up. These security measures were taken primarily against German civilian personnel.

Troops may see a loudspeaker unit going up and down the front from Army level, but they are not told anything much about it. Political officers are given schooling, during their regular course of instruction, in countering enemy psychological warfare. Examples of actual psychological warfare measures are selected from World War II. German loudspeaker voicecasts are reproduced, appealing in bad Russian to Soviet soldiers to come over and enjoy the girls and vodka. The student Zampolits learned that the Soviet soldiers merely laughed, in most instances, but that if they seemed to be listening, the political officer should secure artillery fire on the enemy loudspeaker to silence it, or on the immediate front in order to drown it out. He should gather the men about him and refute the voicecast, pointing out that the Germans lied, that they had no regard for the Soviet soldier, and the soldier's duty lay in fighting for his motherland. Leaflets should be combated by similar explanations to the affected troops.

I do not think they are carried out in all cases. Defection is very bad for Soviet prestige.

have supported the regime. If I found that life in the West was so much better, people in that area would wonder if this were really true, and Soviet stories only lies. The whole thing is forgotten. In another instance, the wife of a Soviet Army captain, stationed in Austria, suddenly lost touch with him. She sought word from the Army, and finally relief from the Government. Eventually she was informed officially that he had been killed by the Banderisti. She never got a pension. He could have defected.

I should like to add here a brief discussion of the factors leading to defection and the impact of the Western world. There were many ups and downs in Soviet policy regarding discipline in the army after World War II, with resulting morale changes among troops and officers. The period immediately following the end of hostilities in Europe was the low point in Soviet military discipline, and was followed by the movement toward extremely tight control over officers and men which is now in effect in the garisons in Germany. The ban on fraternization contributed most toward poor morale

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though in slightly different ways for officers than for men. The extreme cloistering of the troops in Germany was a cause of dissatisfaction for the men but the rigors of the training schedule and the weight of difficult duties left little time for the expression of resentment. Rather, the effect was a keyed up state of mind which would be militarily useful to the Soviets should they decide to initiate hostilities. The mass of enlisted personnel presently in Germany has poor educational backgrounds as a result of World War II dislocation and this contributes to the uncritical approach with which they face their present environment. Among the officers, however, the strict discipline has resulted in the development of increasingly devious attempts to beat the game, with the accompanying damage to the officers' moral fiber which such behavior breeds. All of the above-mentioned factors tend to override any original reluctance to defect, 50X1 pushing ethical considerations into the background.

The aspects of Western life which had the greatest impact [redacted] were twofold. Initially it was the profusion of material wealth and comfort which impressed me most, but this was followed by the realization of the importance of my newly found freedom to direct my own life.

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